



**Greetings from Senator Hardiman...**

## **FAMILY INDEPENDENCE AGENCY BUDGET IS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE SENATE**

As chair of the Family Independence Agency (FIA) Subcommittee I am extremely happy that my colleagues from both sides of the aisle voted to pass SB 283 (S-1), the 2004 budget for the FIA. SB 283 contains just under \$4 billion dollars, and funds programs ranging from cash assistance to child and adult protective services, juvenile programs for troubled and delinquent youth and programs to help clients make the transition from welfare to work. The Family Independence Agency has worked hard over the past several years to move more families off of cash assistance programs/welfare to work. My focus when balancing this budget was to provide families with more programs designed to make this transition possible.

I am confident that SB 283 balances the needs for public accountability of funds with responsible programs to help meet the present needs and make critical new investments in addressing root causes of social and community concerns. I believe strong families build strong communities, and the FIA budget approved furthers that goal.

## **SENATOR HARDIMAN'S FIGHT FOR GRAND RAPIDS FUNDING IS A SUCCESS**

The Commerce, Labor & Economic Development Subcommittee of the full Senate Appropriations agreed to three proposals concerning the Grand Rapids area that I introduced. The amendments included restoring an additional \$5 million to the Life Sciences Corridor as well as funded the Grand Rapids Area Pre-College Engineering Program (GRAPCEP) with \$250,000 and restored the funding for the Workers' Compensation Appellate Commission.

The Life Sciences Corridor has shown great progress during its first two years of operation. With the promise of this initial work we should not abruptly end this research. Other states have been using Michigan as a model state for beginning to fund competing Life Science Corridor programs of their own. It is crucial that my senate colleagues understand how essential it is that we protect this investment not just for Grand Rapids, but for the state's economic development.

GRAPCEP has been a very successful program for many students in the Grand Rapids area over the last several years. This funding will allow the program to continue to develop math, science and personal skills for our young people and prepare them for engineering careers.

The Workers Compensation Appellate Commission has been an important tool for businesses and employees across this state. By restoring the funding, I want to prevent any backlog of workers compensation cases.

## **SENATOR HARDIMAN'S AMENDMENT RESTORES LIBRARY FUNDING FOR GRAND RAPIDS**

Earlier this week I offered an amendment to the Department of History Arts and Libraries (HAL) budget that would restore \$50,000 in funding for the Grand Rapids Public Library. The Senate passed the HAL budget with my amendment to continue the discussions for public library funding. I do realize we are early in the budget process; however, library funding is worth the long fight.

I sponsored the amendment to the HAL budget, to ensure that children will have updated books and a comfortable and safe library to visit. Reading is so important to our children and for Michigan's future. We must do all we can to supply them with the tools they need.

The Department of History Arts and Libraries (HAL) budget will now be considered by the House of Representatives.

## **SENATOR HARDIMAN APPLAUDS RESTORATIONS OF TRANSPORTATION FUNDING**

I support "Priority First!" a program which restores funding for 34 key road projects in Michigan. The "Priority First!" project will allow local communities to continue critical road projects which the Governor has "deferred." We must support our local communities who are counting on these projects to ease the growth pains and to continue to enhance their future economy. The projects in my district include the I-96/36<sup>th</sup> Street Interchange and the proposed additional exits off I-96, East of the Thornapple River.

It would be advantageous to put today's most needed transportation projects on hold for five years. We need to continue moving forward on the projects we have worked on, studied and have planned for to build a stronger Michigan.

## **LEGAL BIRTH BILL PASSES SENATE**

Legislation seeking to protect infants by clearly establishing the point at which they become legally protected individuals passed the Senate this week. Senate Bill 395 establishes that legal birth, when legal personhood and rights commence for a human being, is at the point at which any part of the live child has been delivered outside their mother's body.

In Roe v. Wade and the legal decisions that follow it, the Supreme Court established that a fully born child is afforded full constitutional rights, and that child within her mother is not a legally-protected person. In the majority opinion of Roe v. Wade and subsequent decisions, the Supreme Court never defined "unborn;" nor did it bar the states from defining "born." Senate Bill 395 clarifies this ambiguity, establishing a bright line between when pregnancy ends and birth begins. The bill is headed to the House for consideration.

## **SENATE SAVES K-12 EDUCATION OPERATIONAL FUNDING**

The Senate is making steadfast progress in cutting administrative costs for K-12 education by passing two bills giving local school districts flexibility in their operating budgets. This week legislation was sent to the House

that streamlines the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) and allows individual districts to decide if they desire to eliminate professional development requirements.

Currently, data submitted by schools is submitted to CEPI and numerous other state agencies. Senate Bill 365 requires that all data submissions will be made directly to CEPI. Senate Bill 366 allows each individual school district to decide if they want to eliminate teacher development requirements. The Senate Fiscal Agency has reported that districts could save between \$35 and \$40 million alone by not having to pay substitute teacher costs while day-to-day teachers are out of the classroom.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

The Hardiman Herald by Senator Bill Hardiman is designed to provide residents and organizations with a timely update of his activity in Lansing. If you have any questions or do not wish to receive this e-mail, please contact Senator Hardiman's office.

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